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"The Unbearable Lightness of Cleaning": Representations of Domestic Practice and Products in *Good Housekeeping* Magazine (UK): 1951–2001

Lydia Martens & Sue Scott

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In this paper we begin to open the black box that constitutes the organisation of domestic cleaning and consumption in the latter half of the twentieth century. We focus specifically on change and continuity in the manner in which cleaning practices and cleaning products are represented in the UK woman's magazine Good Housekeeping, *in the late modern period. After a discussion of the modern history of cleanliness, we proceed with a rationale for why this magazine was chosen for our analysis, followed by a summary of our methodology. We then argue that three phases of representation may be delineated in the time period we investigated. The first phase, which is apparent in the 1951 and 1961 issues, we have named "pride in domestic practice" and it covers a period when, what we call "the women's lobby", speaks in a uniform voice about the tasks of the housewife and the purpose of domestic cleaning. The second phase, manifest in the 1971 and 1981 issues, is termed "domestic dreaming", and it heralds a period when* Good Housekeeping *calls its readership to dream about the potentials of a transformed consumer culture. The third phase, which is evident in some respects in 1981, but which is more clearly present in 1991 and 2001, we have called "modern advising in a late modern world". During this period,* Good Housekeeping *settles into a new role as a modern advisor of cleaning products and practices within the context of a world that poses significant complexities. Our discussion also focuses on how three values of cleanliness; that associated with germs, aesthetics and efficiency/ease are present in the magazine. Our analysis is contextualised in relation to the cultural silencing of cleanliness in this period and related to social and cultural changes associated with feminism and consumer culture.*

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Introduction

The late twentieth century organisation of domestic cleaning has not inspired much scholarly curiosity (Ackerley 1994). As a form of domestic practice, cleaning may be conceived of as both domestic work and consumption. In terms of domestic work, research has primarily concerned itself with such work in its totality, or chosen to concentrate on types of work other than cleaning (such as feeding work or childcare). Consequently, the most prominent question considered regarding domestic work has been whether the organisation of domestic work has changed as a consequence of women spending more of their time in the labour force (e.g. Hochschild 1989). Even when considering the potentially very revealing analysis of time-series data by Sullivan (1997), we are confronted with aggregate tables, making it uncertain as to whether the suggested decline in the hours spent between 1975 and 1997 is due to a decline in time spent on cooking, on cleaning or on both. With the exception of some speculation, we know relatively little about cleaning work in the late modern period.

House cleaning is interesting not only from the standpoint of work, but also from the perspective of consumer culture. It may be regarded as consumption practice in the sense that it is in essence about the maintenance, ordering and organisation of domestic material culture. Washing, ironing and returning clothes to their rightful places in the home and tidying away toys and other objects strewn across the house, all constitute practice with material culture. Such acts of cleaning involve the mobilisation of various associated products, goods and resources. Washing clothes, for instance, necessitates the use of water, a washing machine, electricity, washing powder, etc. These require procurement, ordering, maintenance and cleaning in their own right. Even so, consumption researchers have not shown much interest in cleaning and cleanliness (also see Ger and Yenicioglu 2004). As a form of consumption, cleaning clearly belongs to the domain of "ordinary consumption", which includes those practices that "have become so mundane, so taken-for-granted, so normal, that most people, including scholars, fail to appreciate their significance" (Gronow and Warde 2001, 4).

Academic silences are interesting in themselves, but also for the extent in which they mirror cultural silences. Such silences are particularly relevant in relation to aspects primary to women's lived experience (e.g. Smith 1987). The aim of this paper, therefore, is to begin to open the black box that constitutes the organisation of domestic cleaning and consumption in the latter half of the twentieth century, with a specific focus on the roles and responsibilities of the domestic practitioner.[1] Our investigation has been historical in nature, being directed at change and continuity in the manner in which cleaning practices and cleaning products are represented in the UK woman's magazine *Good Housekeeping*, in the late modern period. After a discussion of the modern history of cleanliness in which we outline the paper's aims, we proceed with a rationale for why this magazine was chosen for our analysis, followed by a summary of our methodology. We then move on to discuss three phases of representation that are apparent in the period studied. Finally, these phases and the movement between them

are related to the problematic of the silencing of domestic cleaning and the social and cultural circumstances surrounding domestic practice in the late modern period.

The Early Twentieth Century History of Cleaning

In contrast to the silence on contemporary cleaning practices, historical debate on the nature of cleaning, cleanliness and hygiene is vigorous, pointing to the dynamic nature of change in bodily and domestic cleanliness over time (Vigarello 1988).[2] Modernity, and associated with it, the growth of a consumer society are considered as salient in processes of momentous social and cultural change surrounding cleanliness, starting at the end of the nineteenth century (McClary 1980; Bushman and Bushman 1988; Vinikas 1992; Tomes 1998; Sivulka 2000). These changes are manifest in the many contemporary and routine cleanliness practices, which would have been unheard of a century earlier. The regular washing of hands and bodies with water and soap, the regular cleaning of toilets, sinks and work surfaces with water and disinfectants and the killing of flies that happen to find themselves in the house, are all activities that followed the discovery of that minute *invisible* thing, the germ. Germ theory generated major shifts in thinking about disease, its prevention and cleanliness in the late nineteenth century.

According to Tomes, the real breakthrough of the germ theory of disease came around the turn of the twentieth century when there was a growing awareness that germs passed between human beings, and spread disease "by seemingly innocuous behaviors such as coughing, sneezing and spitting, sharing common drinking cups, or failing to wash hands before eating". (Tomes 1998, 7). Germs became domesticated during this time. The development of home economics and other institutions, which offered rare opportunities for middle class women with a science education to earn a living, was crucial here (Attar 1990). They set about popularising this scientific discourse, by raising the germ consciousness of a more widespread section of women and by making home economics an integral part of women's education. Concomitant socially significant changes included the development of the public utilities infrastructure and the decline of domestic service, which left middle class women doing their own home-making (Palmer 1989; Horwood 1997). In the inter-war years, home economists, feminists and woman's magazines, like *Good Housekeeping*, debated the efficiency of domestic work (Frederick 1920; Richards 1929; Gilbreth 1959; Cieraad 2002). These interest groups shared a common vision about the role and purpose of women in the domestic sphere and together, they significantly raised the profile of women's domestic work during the inter-war years.

Efficient domestic management was not premised on domestic work alone, but also relied heavily on the use of a variety of new commodities. The advice was to brush and scrub toilets with disinfectant powder on a daily basis. To prevent dust from flying about and spreading on, for instance, uncovered food, the advice was to change practice from dry to wet mopping, and the vacuum cleaner, a new invention, was hailed as "a great hygienic boon" (Tomes 1998, 144) as it sucked up dangerous dust. Germ dangers and the transformation of domestic practices also led to a critique of Victorian

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decor, and the introduction of more modern internal design that was easy to keep clean (Forty 1986). The growth of an advice literature, that in Britain included domestic tomes such as Mrs Beeton's and woman's monthlies, like *Good Housekeeping*, were also part of this expansion of consumer culture.

With the widespread adoption of such practices, we move into the period Hoy (1997) has characterised as the "culture of cleanliness". However, it would be inaccurate to argue that germs and efficiency thinking were the only stimulants to the development of such a culture. By the middle of the twentieth century, when germ awareness was declining in cultural prominence (see Tomes 1998), standards of cleanliness became symbolically increasingly associated with a domestic sphere that both looked and smelled good. It could therefore be argued that by the middle of the twentieth century, domestic cleanliness was premised on three main cultural concerns; germs, appearance and the efficiency or ease with which cleaning could be accomplished. These tapped into different aspects of domestic care taking. Germs needed to be controlled because they were a potential cause of ill health for household members. Efficiency thinking was crucially about perfecting the housewifely role and attaining higher standards of cleanliness. Appearance concerns came forth from a mixture of cultural concerns, but also tapped into the task of making the home a welcoming and cosy place to be.[3]

What happened to this "culture of cleanliness" in the latter half of the twentieth century is uncertain. Recently, Shove (2003) has argued that the frequency with which we clean our bodies and clothes is greater than ever before. Yet, those contributing to the early twentieth century history of cleanliness often finish mid-century with a voice of concern: about the declining status of cleaning; about the declining skill of the housewife (Matthews 1987; Roberts 1995; Robinson and Milkie 1998); and about decline in domestic cleaning (Hoy 1997). In her postscript to *Chasing Dirt*, Hoy asks: "Are we as clean as we used to be? Probably not. At least, that's my quick and dirty answer to the one question I am most frequently asked" (1997, 179). She then adds substance to her argument by alluding to some well-rehearsed characteristics of late modern households and their organisation: more women going out to work, few husbands helping out at home, women refusing to be "supermoms" and learning to live with declining standards of cleanliness in their households whilst turning to commercial alternatives instead of utilising old fashioned elbow grease, and women realising that little satisfaction and status is to be derived from housework (see also Bird 1979; Cross 2000).

Hoy here touches on the contemporary moralistic concern that the proliferation of domestic products negatively affects the standard of domestic practice. This concern has also cropped up in relation to other types of domestic labour, like feeding work (e.g. Warde and Martens 2000). From such research, however, it is clear that commerce does not take over from domestic practitioners in any simple or straightforward manner as the culture of domestic caring operates as a limiting force on the unfettered adoption of new products into the domestic sphere. This calls to mind Warde's (1997) work on the antinomies of taste in relation to food consumption, and especially, the antinomies between care and convenience, health and indulgence, and economy and extravagance. According to Warde, these contemporary antinomies are evidence of the complexities

of contemporary living, which bring a degree of anxiety into acts of choosing between different products and between commodities and own practices. Yet, all are intimately connected with cultural perceptions about good domestic housekeeping and familial care. In this paper, we explore the historical conjuncture between the silencing of domestic cleaning and these taste antinomies. We have therefore examined how *Good Housekeeping* portrayed the tasks and responsibilities of homemakers, focusing especially on discursive formulations of germs and appearance concerns in cleaning, and suggestions about ease and practice replacement. Apart from the reasons just mentioned, this is interesting because the post-war years are characterised by another phase of commercial incursion into the domestic sphere, implicating domestic practice along the way (Silva 2000; Shove 2003).

Good Housekeeping: Advising the Housewife

The data on which this paper draws—*Good Housekeeping*—very much represents the beginning of a more extensive project that pieces together the late modern history of cleaning and cleanliness in the UK. The phenomenon of the woman's magazine has itself been subject to scholarly interest (White 1970; Ferguson 1983; Winship 1987; Beetham 1996; Beetham and Boardman 2001). Magazines have also commonly been used as a resource for investigations into the conditions of women's lives (Ballaster et al. 1991) and the development and character of consumer culture (Winship 1987; Scanlon 1995; Ohmann 1996). *Good Housekeeping* magazine itself has also received some attention, and has been studied for an exposition of the nature of domestic work in relation to consumer culture in the first half of the twentieth century (White 1970; Horwood 1997) and in the contemporary context (Warde 1997).

Good Housekeeping (*GH* from here on) was the most suitable documentary resource for our purposes for several reasons. It has resided at the top of popularity scales for many years[4] and is more complex than many other women's magazines. Originally an American woman's monthly dating from 1885, it came out in the UK for the first time in March 1922 (White 1970; Horwood 1997). In this paper, we concentrate on an analysis of the content of the UK magazine and the writings of its Institute (established in 1924). The Good Housekeeping Institute (here referred to as GHI) is described as a "non-profit-making limited liability company independent of [*GH*], although regularly contributing articles to its editorial pages".[5] The GHI is further described as a "champion of consumer rights, which has been setting benchmarks for quality since 1924" (*GH* 2001, February, 3). The main purpose of *GH* has been to inform the domestic practitioner on domestic matters, and the reader is frequently reminded of the authority, reputation and trustworthiness of its Institute.

> Nearly thirty-seven years have passed since the domestic experts, engineers, chemists and space-planners of the GHI—the oldest consumer advisory organization in this country—piloted the scientific approach to domestic problems, to bring in a new age for British housewives. A lot of time ... a lot of experience. Yet today the Institute is as forward-looking as ever, and, building on that experience, is meeting in the same pioneer spirit the challenge of modern living. (*GH* 1961, January, 39)

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GH is perhaps the best example of a "domestically-orientated magazine" (Horwood 1997, 24) positioned at the centre of the interface between the domestic and commercial spheres. As such, the GHI would not just help the housewife "with running the home"; it would also help her with shopping, by offering "expert" guidance on what to buy rather than just provide advertisements for products. It was therefore clear to us from the outset that *GH* was the most appropriate data source for this project.

A further advantage for choosing this magazine is that accessible archives exist, making it possible to explore it in relation to our subject matter over the whole period under investigation. We chose a sampling strategy that included looking through all twelve issues for the years 1951, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2001; a sample of seventy-two issues in total. This sampling strategy was deemed appropriate given our specific focus on change and continuity in cleanliness discourses over time. Beginning with 1951 was thought to be appropriate, as this year was sufficiently far removed from the war-year editions with their specific coverage and limitations (White 1970; Braithwaite, Walsh and Davies 1987). It also allowed for the exploration of the whole of the second half of the twentieth century. Issues were mostly complete,[6] and for 1951 and 1961, featured approximately 150 pages, whilst later years contained in the region of 200 pages per issue.

Given the more developed scholarly knowledge about the cultural and social circumstances of middle class women's lives, it may be suggested that the magazine's focus on a middle class female readership is a disadvantage.[7] However, in the context of there being scant knowledge about late modern cleanliness *per se*, we have rejected this as a problem. We have searched for and scrutinised articles, special features and editorials that comment on cleanliness, cleaning, cleaning products and appliances. The Institute's contributions to the magazine could mostly be located by reference to the contents page. We have collected materials on kitchens and kitchen cleanliness, which was our specific focus, with other areas and aspects of cleaning work being covered more summarily.[8] We surveyed and examined advertisements for kitchens and kitchen and cleanliness products that appeared in the magazine in those years. We also looked for the magazine's reporting on its own activities and those of the GHI. All articles, advertisements and comments that sparked our interest were noted and their content summarised, transcribed verbatim or selectively photocopied before being subjected to interpretive analysis. The decision about how to record magazine content depended on the perceived importance of specific pieces and whether parts of the text might offer illustrative quotations, but was also restricted by the conditions set by the archives.[9] Researcher comments and observations at the time of reading the magazine content have been recorded alongside material from the magazine itself. Our main interest has been in a rigorous qualitative analysis of themes that occurred and recurred in the text of the magazine.[10]

In the next sections, we consider the findings of our analysis. We argue that three phases of representation may be delineated in the time period we investigated. The first phase, which is apparent in the 1951 and 1961 issues, we have named "pride in domestic practice" and it covers a period when, what we call "the women's lobby", speaks in a uniform voice about the tasks of the housewife and the purpose of domestic cleaning.

The second phase, manifest in the 1971 and 1981 issues, is termed "domestic dreaming", and it heralds a period when it calls its readership to dream about the potentials of a transformed consumer culture. The third phase, which is evident in some respects in 1981, but which is more clearly present in 1991 and 2001, we have called "modern advising in a late modern world". During this period, *Good Housekeeping* settles into a new role as a modern advisor of cleaning products and practices within the context of a world that poses significant complexities.

Pride in Domestic Practice

The direct post-war years were a period when housewives experienced great difficulty in keeping the domestic sphere clean, particularly those from the working classes, a fact recognised by British Prime Minister Atlee at the start of the Second World War as something that required urgent action in a country which was mobilising women (Summerfield 1984). In the early part of the twentieth century, housewives conducted their everyday work without the benefits of electricity and gas, and in the context of a domestic infrastructure, which had not enjoyed a great level of input by industrialists and scientists. However, this slowly changed, in part because entrepreneurs recognised the domestic sphere as an opportunity for commercial expansion and a host of new products were designed to cater for rising standards of cleanliness and contributed towards the move towards modern "clean" home interiors (Forty 1986; Vinikas 1992; Clarke 1999; Loehlin 1999; Sivulka 2000). Oral historical work with working class women in the North West of England found that all participants had electricity by 1950 (Roberts 1995). Consequently, domestic appliances that worked on electricity and gas slowly made their way into most UK homes in the decades following the immediate post-war years.

In this context it is perhaps not surprising that in 1951 and 1961, *GH* repeatedly hammered home the idea that cleaning work should be made as easy as possible, and this meant two things: the routinisation of cleaning work and the adoption of labour saving domestic appliances and cleaning products that facilitated this work.[11] In the "Brides Homemaker" supplement of March 1961, newly wed were not only advised to purchase domestic appliances wisely according to the available budget, they were also informed that by making housework routine and regular, it was made easier: "... it is, indeed, that automatic quality—of doing the hundred-and-one necessities quickly, deftly and without having to stop to think—that really is the secret of effortless (or almost effortless) efficiency" (*GH* 1961, March Supplement, 35).

Easing the work of cleaning may serve two different priorities, signifying different ethos of cleanliness. It may signal a desire for less cleaning in terms of time and effort expended. If a significant proportion of domestic homemakers abhor cleaning and/or have little time to spend on it, this formulation of "ease" may well speak to the popular imagination. This understanding of "ease" speaks to the convenience part of the care and convenience antinomy and goes against the grain of housewifely craft and care. "Easing the work of cleaning" may also be inherent in a recommendation of domestic practice, where it is physically hard to attain a desired high standard of domestic

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cleanliness. Acknowledging the burden on the homemaker as a problem on which it could advise, this was the ethos of cleanliness adhered to by *GH* in 1951 and 1961. This notion of "ease" speaks to the care part of the care and convenience antinomy and in effect supports the cultural understanding of what it is that constitutes good housewifely care and attention.

As late as 1961, we find evidence of a pedagogy of cleanliness that treats cleaning as a temporally structured process connecting different tasks and domestic products to achieve a high standard of cleanliness. Advice that spoke the language of temporal ordering was incorporated in pieces on spring-cleaning and included reference to the daily, weekly and monthly ordering of the work. These elements of cleaning work come together in a special pull out supplement published, called "Take Time to be Young", published in association with Hoover[12] in the April issue of 1961. *GH* states:

> Healthy homes go a long way towards being happy homes. First and foremost have a clean house, really clean. Get rid not only of obvious dirt but of the insidious underneath sort—and not just in great twice a year turnouts that leave your home disinfected like a hospital, but in regular day to day chores that are second nature to you. ... This high standard of hygiene is not something that has to be worked at too consciously, and this degree of cleanliness is not a fetish. It is simply a standard that can perfectly easily be maintained in a daily routine, that will not only keep your home fresh and gay, but a safe and sure place for the family to grow up in. (*GH* 1961, April Supplement, 13)

Advertisers also spoke this language of ease. The British Electrical Development Association, for instance, stated that "electricity makes life easier" (*GH* 1951, February, 75) and the gas council claimed that their product gave housewives "holidays from housework" (*GH* 1951, January, 9). Advertisers even adopted the notion into the name for their product, like Kleen-e-ze (a range of brushes and mops) and Easiclene (a brand of sinks). Kleenof, the producer of a product to clean dirty, caked-on ovens, stated that this product would replace the elbow grease needed to clean ovens without its aid:

> Nothing is more discouraging than a dirty oven. And of course normally it is so hard to clean! Any amount of rubbing and scrubbing is needed to shift that baked on grease. But with Kleenof, the wonder oven cleaner, even the toughest burned on grease is whisked away without bother. Just spread Kleenof on, leave it for a few hours and whip it off, presto. Your oven is as clean as the day you bought it. No rubbing, no scrubbing, no messy hands. Oven cleaning is easy with Kleenof! (*GH* 1961, February, 14)

Other producers who claimed that their product made light of the cleaning load included producers of vacuum cleaners, washing machines and cookers,[13] producers of kitchen sinks,[14] producers of surface covering and flooring,[15] and producers of cleaning products.[16]

GH and its advertisers therefore seemed to talk a similar language. In some respects, this is hardly surprising given that, through its Seal of Guarantee, *GH* built a close relationship with the producers it allowed to advertise in the magazine. In 1961, 1,147 manufacturers and agencies were entitled to use the Seal, which meant that they were allowed to exhibit the Seal on their products. On behalf of consumers, the Seal provided a guarantee that the products did what they were supposed to do and "if the product guaranteed falls short of the standards we have stipulated", *GH* would provide

a refund or a replacement (*GH* 1961, January, 39). There is some deliberation in the literature on women's magazines about advertisers gaining a greater influence on magazine content as the 1960s progressed (White 1970; Winship 1987). This does not seem to be very relevant to *GH*, which enjoyed long-lasting relationships with many producers over the years, and which has featured special pull out supplements (e.g. the April 1961 supplement quoted above) and advertisement features in conjunction with them right through the period researched.

Still, this apparent proximity warrants further thinking. Products have thus far been described as facilitating cleaning work by making it easier. However, in some advertisements in the course of this period, products are portrayed as actually doing the cleaning work or making this altogether obsolete. Advertisements for disinfectants, like Parazone, Lifeguard and Harpic, for instance, illustrate the claim that the product does the work of killing germs: "Parazone takes care of many aspects of home hygiene, from whitening nappies to reducing the danger of cold infection from soiled handkerchiefs and no germs are left in the sink, drains or lavatory bowl" (*GH* 1961, March, 130). And in the trend towards smooth and modern surfaces, we find the notion that products may replace practices altogether. By "resisting grease and dirt" (*GH* 1961, February, 109), it is suggested that floor covering like Hardura does not really require any cleaning because it does not become dirty. By 1971, we find recommendations for so-called "self-cleaning products", like self-cleaning ovens (*GH* 1971, January, 48) and air extraction fans, like Xpelair, that "make your kitchen self-cleaning" (*GH* 1971, February, 2). This is the first evidence of a "product-replacing-practices" discourse that has so intrigued those lamenting the moralistic consequences of domestic consumption, and that really speaks to the reduction in cleaning work found in the version of "ease" that negates housewifely care.

In this period, called "pride in domestic practice", *GH* continued on its quest to offer solutions to the domestically burdened housewife. Its advice speaks to the pre-war discourse of efficient household management and the notion of housewifery as a specific craft and incorporating specific skills that was shared by various female interest groups. Together these formed a powerful vocal lobby. We shall in the next section see that this ceased to exist as critical voices arose amongst female commentators in the 1960s, suggesting a reason for why *GH* changed the tone of its recommendation.

Entering a Period of Transition: Domestic Dreaming

A new spring arrives in 1971 with *GH* addressing its readers with another article on spring-cleaning. Reading the content suggests change. Whilst appearing to repeat the familiar old message of routinised cleaning: "Keeping the house spick and span should be continuous: calm, effortless and almost unnoticeable" (*GH* 1971, April, 76), it continues not by outlining how that routine should be accomplished, but by providing advice on what products to use. It goes on by stating that as the choice of cleaners is now great, and the housewife consumer faces the difficult task of choosing the right one for the needs of her household, which "depends not just on what you can afford but on the way your home is furnished and on your individual needs" (ibid.). The GHI comes

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to the rescue as it "has been testing new cleaners and household gadgets designed to make light of your load" (ibid., 74). This recommendation embodies two important changes. *GH* relinquishes a discursive prescription of what constitutes good cleaning practice but continued with gusto advice that feeds into the housewife's task of shopping for the domestic sphere. It also turns its attention to the aesthetics of the domestic sphere. This is evident in two ways; by changes in the way the domestic interior is visually represented and by an enhanced focus on the aesthetics of cleanliness.

Small black and white advertisements of cleaning liquids and other household articles are a striking feature of the magazine's visual imagery of domestic space in product advertising in 1951 and 1961. By 1971 and 1981, these have been replaced by colourful photographic images of idealised dream kitchens, which are displayed over double page spreads. Perhaps paradoxically, these kitchens exhibit the immaculate cleanliness associated with the cultural ideal of a high standard of cleanliness that is characteristic of the earlier period, but we would argue that their purpose is to allow the domestic practitioner to dream about the kitchen she could potentially have.

From our inspection of the magazine's content in 1951 and 1961, the conclusion is that germs and hygiene appear almost exclusively in advertisement features. This may be seen as surprising, given *GH*'s stated aim to inform its consumers and the fact that germs and their habits have always been hard for domestic practitioners to understand (Horsfield 1998). As discussed above, Tomes (1998) suggests that the gospel of germs was already on the wane in the early part of the twentieth century, being kept alive mainly by producers and marketers of domestic commodities thereafter. Our analysis of *GH* content corroborates this.[17] During this period, *GH* featured advertisements for the disinfectants Zoflora, Lifeguard, Jeypine, Sanpic, Parazone, Crommesol, Harpic, Napisan and Ibcol (see Table 1).

What is particularly interesting about these advertisements is the fact that most of them tell a story of germ warfare that is infused with notions about appearance and smell. One could speculate that this is an inevitable corollary of the fact that bacteria are invisible to the eye, perhaps accompanied by the knowledge that they multiply quickly. For the anxious domestic practitioner this resulted in uncertainty: how was she to know that her work was indeed effective? One coping strategy would be to become fixated on *showing* that germs were killed. This was achieved through domestic work with a frequency, appearance and smell that symbolised exacting levels of cleanliness. In the long run, the means adopted to achieve the objective of a relative germ-free living: routinised domestic work that emphasised the elements of good appearance and smell became the end in itself. Reading the product discourses around disinfectants (designed specifically to kill germs) suggest that a "clean" odour indicates that the desired spots have been reached. Common to early versions of these products was the presence of a formidable chemical odour, as was the case for disinfectant Dettol. Whilst such products expressed their earnestness through their smell, the products advertised in *GH* magazine in the post-war years, like Zoflora, Crommesol and Jeypine, had adopted more pleasant floral smells. Indeed, the Jeypine advertisement of August 1951 suggested that its smell was what attracted housewives to this disinfectant rather than others:

Table 1 Cleaning products advertised in *Good Housekeeping* (1951–2001*)

	1951	1971	1981	1991	2001**
Antiseptic/ disinfectant	Parazone Zoflora Lifeguard Harpic Jeypine Sanpic	Gar-stik rod Brobat	None found	None found	Domestos
Products for clothes and dish washing	Persil Rinso Wish Dreft Lux Oxidol	None found	Persil Finish Glow-white	Persil Ariel Fairy Comfort Lennor Biotex Sun	Persil Ariel Fairy Comfort Svit Sun Bold Finish Ecover
Insect killer	Flit Motholin Mothacs Flyol	Vapona	Vapona	None found	None found
Furniture care (polish, wax, stain remover)	Johnsons O-cedar Cardinal	Johnsons	Gloss Marigolds	Pledge Scotch Guard	Ercol
Air fresheners	None found	Glade Airwick	1001	Glade Fridge Fresh	None found
Other	Kleenof Brillo pads Vim Gumption Chemico Glo-coat	Kleenof Ajax	None found	Jiff	Cif (Jiff) Cif window wipes
Total	**25**	**8**	**7**	**13**	**13**

Notes: This survey only contains those products advertised in the magazine, either as direct advertisements or advertisement features. It does not include the products GHI recommend readers to use in the process of cleaning.
*The survey for products advertised in the 1961 issues is not complete, and has therefore been omitted from this table. See note 6 for details. Even so, the researchers found five antiseptics/disinfectants products advertised (Parazone, Cromessol, Zoflora, Ibcol and Napisan).
**In the February 2001 issue, advertisements for cleaning products and fluids constituted 14% of the total number of advertisements.

> Germs breed even in the best-kept homes, but not where Jeypine is used! Jeypine destroys germs anywhere and always. It is powerful yet pleasant. Indeed that special Jeypine fragrance is one of the chief reasons why so many households prefer Jeypine for domestic disinfection. ... Let Jeypine pleasantly protect your home. (*GH* 1951, August, 26)

This trend in *GH* advertising is interesting, in part because it prefigures the subsequent proliferation of air fresheners, pot-pouris and scented candles, some of which were advertised in the magazine in 1971, 1981 and 1991 (see Table 1).

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Killing germs and getting rid of nasty smells was not enough! In the sales pitch of some disinfectants, claims about their qualities tripled up in the statement that this product would also make for shining, white and sparkling interiors. Parazone, which is essentially a disinfectant, provides a good example. Its January 1951 advertisement reads: "make your home a shining example. Every parazoned home is a shining example of the whiteness and brightness Parazone so generally bestows" (*GH* 1951, January, 58). This suggests a suppressed concern with health and germs, and the priority of "the appearance of clean".

Let us elaborate on the context around which the second phase of representation of cleaning and cleaning products, that of "domestic dreaming", emerged. The 1960s were a period of considerable upheaval; socially, culturally, and for women's magazines more generally. As outlined by White (1970) and Winship (1987), *GH* was itself subject to some major changes during the 1960s: this decade featured the lowest sales figures for some time; it changed ownership; it incorporated another woman's magazine; and it did away with its famous Seal of Approval.[18] Lower sales figures were a feature of the women's magazines market more generally, and Winship (1987) has related these to the advance of television, which provided women with an important alternative source of leisure and entertainment. It seems, therefore, that all women's magazines were under some pressure to make changes. If we accept that *GH* tried to maintain and improve on its comparative popularity by reflecting the important issues in women's lives (Braithwaite et al. 1987, 7), then the 1960s shift in *GH* content and presentation must be sought in the general social and cultural changes that characterised the 1960s. We focus here on two socio-cultural changes: a shift away from acceptance of authoritative prescription of practices and the development of a new phase of consumerism.

The 1960s was a period sufficiently distanced from the Second World War and its aftermath to make it quite distinct from the earlier wartime experience. In the direct post-war years, an appeal was made for UK citizens to pull together for the common good. Resource shortages meant that this was clearly evident in the lengthy period of rationing, which demanded a sense of austerity and the limitation of desires (Douglas and Isherwood 1979). Yet, household income was rising, in part because a rising number of married women remained or became economically active. British census figures show that whilst in 1920, only 10% of married women were economically active, in 1951 this was 26%, rising to 35% in 1961 and 49% in 1971. The development of second wave feminism, alongside other social movements in the 1960s, has been conceptualised as a more general phase of informalisation in the modern civilising process, in which accepted social norms and values associated with overt authoritative social relations became challenged (Wouters 1986). It has also been conceptualised as the start of a criticism of the project of modernity (Giddens 1991; Beck 1992).

We argued earlier how the direct post-war years saw a discursive consensus in circles interested in, and advocating the importance of, women's domestic role. The housewife's lobby is interesting not only for the manner in which it placed housewifely skill on a pedestal of appreciation and developed a uniform message about how domestic tasks were to be accomplished, but also because it was so optimistic about the products of modernity that purportedly solved domestic problems. If we agree that this lobby

contained a feminist perspective, it was very much based on the "complementarity" thinking characteristic of early twentieth century feminism. As increasing numbers of married women were going out to work in the post-war years, we see the rise of dissenting voices that criticise the very foundation of these ideas. These indicate the end of the consensus.[19]

During the 1960s and thereafter, for instance, feminist historians rejected the idea that domestic appliances "simply" save labour, because they were accompanied by higher cleanliness standards and consequently demanded the frequent repetition of cleaning jobs (Myrdal and Klein 1956; Cowan 1983; Roberts 1995). And, as pointed out by Horsfield (1998), early second wave feminists, like Betty Friedan and Simone de Beauvoir, attacked the notion of high cleanliness standards and pitied the woman who thought she should aspire to such standards. Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique*, originally published in 1963, is particularly interesting because in here we find an attack not only on the cultural ideals of domestic practice, but also on the consumerism that enveloped women's domestic presence. The famous "problem without a name", coined by Friedan, finds its continuation in a chapter entitled "The Sexual Sell". Here, she wonders why, given that there are now routes open to women to "enlarge" their concerns and interests, giving meaning to their lives over and above what they get through their activities in the domestic sphere, so few women take advantage of these opportunities. She argues that housewives are stimulated not to think "beyond the domestic sphere" by the captains of industry, who have a vested interest in keeping them at home, where they spend their time buying "more things for the home" (Friedan [1963] 1965, 206).

> There are certain facts in life so obvious and mundane that one never talks about them. … Why is it never said that the really crucial function, the really important role that women serve as housewives is *to buy more things for the house*. In all the talk of femininity and woman's role, one forgets that the real business of America is business. But the perpetuation of housewifery, the growth of the feminine mystique, makes sense (and dollars) when one realises that women are the chief customers of American business. (Friedan [1963] 1965, 206–07)

Friedan's enthusiastic utilisation of critical theory is more than evident in the way she develops this chapter. However, she failed to see two things here; that industry had much to gain if households had more money to spend and that women might actually enjoy their engagement with consumer culture for various reasons. For our purposes, it is important to acknowledge that there is a clear contradiction between the ideas present in the thinking of 1960 feminism and *GH*'s role as admirer and adviser of housewives. Seen in this light, it is quite understandable that the prescriptive tone of its advice on domestic practice disappeared.

But it did not change significantly in other ways. In relation to consumer culture, for instance, *GH*'s allegiance was not with the ideas that were coming from second wave feminism, but with the captains of industry, to which it belonged. It remained an advisor of Mrs Consumer as the 1960s saw the consolidation of a new phase of consumerism in the domestic sphere (Cross 2000). The post-war years had been characterised by austerity, by making do, by "no-nonsense housekeeping". Housekeepers were interested

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in the new domestic commodities that were on offer, and which were "needed" to fill the many newly built homes. Advertising in the 1950s and 1960s therefore took the form of practical product information, and *GH* happily printed adverts of many "basic" cleaning fluids that could be used to maintain the home. But as affluence increased and domestic space was saturated with the consumer desirables of the 1950s, consumer aspirations shifted, too. The dream kitchens advertised in 1971 and 1981 herald a time when consumers were no longer solely interested in basic product information, but were inclined to alternate between the practical and the fantastical, the mundane and the special. The practical domestic concerns that had informed the practices and interiors of prior generations, and that were associated, for instance, with health dangers associated with germs and the difficulties of tackling real dirt, were becoming distant memories, and consequently housewives were more open to being inspired by a sensory representation of domestic space that was aesthetically more pleasing and pleasant, and that moved away from the cold sterility of the modern interior.

To us this period appears as one of transformation. Having lost its clear role as adviser of housewives that included practical aspects of household management, *GH* was in search for a new *reason d'etre* that would make it once again indispensable as an advisor of the homemaker and distinct from other women's magazines. We argue that *GH* comes into its own again in the last phase, when it develops the role of offering modern advice in a world full of complexity and "new" dangers, which through its reporting, it helps to construct. This last phase sees a return of the practical issues of domestic management.

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Modern Advice in a Complex and Contradictory Late Modern World

The home has historically been conceived as a safe as well as a dangerous place. Our research suggests that *GH* never allows the housewife to wallow in the idea that her home is a safe haven (see also Martens and Scott 2006). Recurrent discussions on safety appear, pointing to the task of the housewife to always be vigilant. The reader is told that 1958 saw 8,109 fatal accidents in Britain's homes, with the early 1980s featuring the somewhat lower but still significant rate of 6,500 cases. Young children are described as most at risk, and in an article of September 1961 (pp. 40–41) entitled "Safety, Safety, Safety for Small Fry", we find a horrendous list of accidents that happen to children in the home. Kitchens do not fare well in those descriptions. They are described as "workshops, not playrooms, and children should not be left alone in them" (*GH* 1961, September, 41).

In the period between 1981 and 2001, a series of "new" dangers make their appearance. In March 1981, the magazine publishes an award-winning article by Judith Cook on the potential health dangers of weed killers and insecticides that are routinely used in British homes. In June 1991, the GHI advises care in the use of cling film whilst reflecting on the recent MAFF[20] warnings that using cling film on fatty foods may release harmful chemicals. From 1981 onwards, too, we start to find coverage on "green issues", with 1991 including the regular feature "Good Earthkeeping", which at times makes suggestions for greener cleaning that does not include the use of modern

chemical cleaning products. Given our interest in germs, we have searched for the recurrence of the germ threat in connection with UK food scares in the late 1980s. There is one reference to fatal botulism in the magazine in June 1981, but in 1991 concerns about the contamination of foods with harmful bacteria are expressed frequently, with readers being given various bits of practice advice. In January 1991 (p. 133), readers are advised on how to store food safely in connection with Christmas and associated entertaining; in February 1991 (p. 122), readers are updated about Listeria; and in August 1991 (p. 140), microwaves are discussed in relation to irregular heating of food and the risk of contracting food poisoning as a consequence.

Another feature evident in the pages of the magazine that seems to take on a more prominent place as the years progress is discussion on products. In January and February 1981, for instance, the GHI assesses and recommends brushes and floor mops. Included in the information is the price tag of the mentioned products, and at the end of the discussion, advice is given on how best to store it. In the November issue, chopping boards are discussed, and detailed information is given on the usage and maintenance of wooden boards. In 1991, the GHI discusses, amongst other things, self-cleaning ovens, sinks, household cleaners, washer-driers, kettles, showers, cling film and microwave ovens.

Coverage in *GH* of advertisements for cleaning solutions and disinfectants in specific take a downward turn at first, with very little coverage in 1971 and 1981 issues. What remains are advertisements for products that appeal to the senses—particularly smell. In 1991 and 2001, there appear a "healthier" array of cleaning products, with major brands in clothes and dishwasher products advertised, in conjunction to the cleaning solution Jiff (Cif in 2001) and the disinfectant Domestos in 2001. In the 80th anniversary edition of October 2002, the GHI publishes an article called "80 Years of Advice". It reads: "*GH* has been helping readers how to cook and run their homes ever since 1922. Here are some of our favourite queries from the past 8 decades" (*GH* 2002, October, 29). The first query dates from 1922, the year the magazine started and is a window-cleaning query. The advice given in 1922 was to use a pad of paper dipped in paraffin, after which the window was to be polished with a cloth or chamois. The lingering paraffin smells would keep flies at bay, important in dealing with the spread of germs. In 2002, *GH* advises readers to use a weak vinegar solution if paraffin is not in the kitchen cupboard, though that does not deter flies. They furthermore offer information for those who wish to buy a modern product: when they last tested window-cleaning products, Windolene apparently gave the best results. This example of product/practice variety shows how *GH* refrains from prescribing one specific option for cleaning windows. It illustrates the complexities inherent in late modern domestic life and a harking back to the old practices of past times; they are more environmentally friendly because chemically less complex and they offer less chance of bodily/health harm.

The editorial articles that bring new dangers into the domestic consciousness and that discuss the varieties of a product that is available on the market confer a sense of increasing complexity, in the domestic product world and the world more generally: of increasing variety on offer; of different suppliers selling similar items at dissimilar

prices; of technological developments altering once familiar products and introducing radically new ones that require different modes of operation and maintenance; of changing social concerns and values that implicate everyday domestic practices and spawn new products; of a yearning for the simpler "good-old-days" and of increasingly varied households.

Reading across the years, *GH* also contains contradictory advice and content. Importantly, the modern cleaning solutions that were developed in the early twentieth century to aid the housewife in ensuring the good health of her family by killing harmful germs, are in the early post-war years described as dangerous chemicals in their own right that are risky to children and others in the home. In later years, these same chemicals come to pollute the environment. In the same year (1981) as the article that questions the producers of the Vapona Flykiller on the safety of their product appears, *GH* allows this product to be advertised in the magazine. Amongst advice to avoid bacterial food poisoning, the dream kitchen featured by Hygena in April 1991 displays a tray of eggs sitting on the kitchen surface. This is common for other kitchen adverts in the magazine as well. Hygienists would have them stored in the refrigerator.

These examples confer a sense of the contradictions of the modern science that is fed into the domestic product world that implicate the domestic practitioner's concern for familial health. Other examples question the claims made that specific products make the homemaker's life easier. Perhaps the most interesting example that illustrates the paradoxes of "technological improvement" is the self-cleaning oven. It comes with oven linings that, according to *GH*, do not keep immaculately clean, can easily be clogged up, then require very careful cleaning treatment, and come with a warning about the range of cleaning products that can not be used on them (*GH* 1981, December, 244). This suggests that new products are often accompanied by new operating and maintenance instructions that in the end may entail that little work is actually saved in adopting a new "labour saving" appliance.

The years 1981, 1991 and 2001 signal the last phase of recommendation: that which we have called "modern advising in a late modern world". In its search for a new role, *GH* has opted for what commerce has been very good at, and that is to offer the consumer homemaker a product which "helps" in making sense of the manifold dangers and complexities of late modern living. By being a conduit for the discussion and representation of late modern complexities and contradictions, *GH* has at the same time been very active in bringing these complexities into the world. In all of this, the image of *GH* as a symbol of modern optimism appears to be continuous. To date, one can find in *GH* discussion of products for the home and advertisements, which are at the cutting edge of technological innovation. New inventions for the home that are identified as progressive and useful have continuously been applauded. Early in the twentieth century, this was very much an unquestioned optimism: specific ends—well-organised, clean and happy homes—could be "easily" attained through specific means—routine and well-managed home craft and cleaning work in which modern aids and appliances, identified by the GHI as "good", were to be used. However, from 1981 onwards it is evident that the magazine adopts a more questioning approach towards the products of modernity. Today, the contradictions of contemporary life are

reflected in the magazine, with which it juggles to some degree, though it clearly has not gone all the way in its criticism of "dubious" household products. It discusses contemporary dangers without questioning its earlier recommendations, and does not suggest that identified dangers should, for instance, lead to the rejection of offending products. Such a stance may be interpreted in different ways. One is that *GH* has always remained impressed by modern inventions, leaving it unable to resort to complete criticism. Another is that it reflects contradictions between editorial and commercial input. And lastly, that *GH* contains stories for different types of reader, those who share its celebration of the modern and those who are more sceptical.

Conclusion: The Unbearable Lightness of Cleaning

In what form is the silencing of cleaning in the late modern period evident in the pages of *GH*? A salient point here is that during the course of the 1960s, it ceased to prescribe a specific manner of doing the domestic work, associated with a specific cultural understanding of how to maintain a household and how to do so well. With the decline in advertisements for cleaning products at this same time, it is clear that the housewifely task of cleaning had a very low profile in the magazine for a while. This indicates a shift in focus from the practical aspects of household maintenance to the fantastic potential of household aesthetics. Whilst immaculate cleanliness radiates from the pages that showcase splendiferous kitchens, the reader remains in the dark about how they may be maintained. The silencing of cleaning in the magazine is evidence of the declining value and prominence of this cultural understanding of domestic maintenance, mirrored in texts by feminist scholars like Oakley (1976) and Roberts (1995). Roberts (1995, 35) in specific talks about the 1970s as a period that witnessed the coming of age of a generation, which did not learn to value the domestic work of their mothers in the same way as their parents had done before them. The 1990s, however, have seen a return of sorts in the discussion of cleaning in the magazine. However, this is a discourse quite distinct from the one manifest in the early post-war years, as it recognises diversity amongst domestic practitioners and complexity in the concerns that feed into their attitudes towards cleanliness.

Silencing the kind of cleaning characteristic of the direct post-war years also supports a general change towards the value imbued in the objects that together form a household's material culture. This is associated with changes in consumer culture. Conceptualising cleaning as a practice of consumption highlights how the magazine of the direct post-war years conceived of cleaning as the maintenance of an existing and valued domestic material infrastructure. Cleaning did not simply mean caring for the family, but also for the domestic setting that surrounded them; an environment that had been carefully put together by the shopping and selection skills of the housewife who operated within budgetary constraints. It could be argued that the silencing of cleaning was conducive to a transformation of consumer culture characterised by product dispensability rather than durability, by product proliferation rather than scarcity. Adopting a consumer ethos that seeks or accepts product proliferation into everyday practices makes it rather more difficult to maintain individual items (as there

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are so many) and means that proportionally more domestic labour is expended on product selection, procurement, ordering, storing and disposal (Lupton and Abbott-Miller 1992).

This raises the question whether an enduring "culture of cleanliness" is evident in contemporary domestic practice? Considering the changing meanings around the concept "ease" suggest that there still exists a cultural imperative for a clean home. As discussed earlier, the first meaning around easing the task of cleaning was one that supported the culture of domesticity that existed in the direct post-war years. What is interesting is that the opposite meaning of the concept, that which negates that culture and prescribes products instead of "DIY" home cleaning, crops up in advertising at a time when we see a silencing of this culture. Later, in the 1990s, we still see "ease" portrayed in advertising in this manner, with clear depictions of "lazing" adults beside "working" domestic machines. However, alongside this discourse, we find one that voices a late modern scepticism with the suggestion that "ease" actually works for the domestic products of modernity. This discourse may speak to the critical domestic consumer who does not concede that products can actually replace good old elbow grease. It seems, therefore, that there still is a cultural pull towards "DIY" cleanliness and pride in domestic practice. This stipulates that cleaning must and cannot become unbearably light.

Based on a reading of *GH* in recent years, we would have to conclude that late modern domestic life is characterised by complexity and difficulty. The task of domestic management is not an easy one for several reasons. As outlined by Beck (1992) and Giddens (1991), the contemporary practitioner has lost the certainty of one specific mode of action and must now choose between varied modes. Yet they alone carry the responsibility for their choices. For homemakers, that responsibility goes, as always, well beyond their personal concerns, and extends to those household members for whom they care. Their role as carers and consumers has become harder in recent years. If the phase of domestic dreaming allowed a distancing from practical concerns, the third phase has brought the household's well-being back into focus, but now in an ultimately more difficult world. There are now more products to choose from, all of which vie with each other for attention and advocate their indispensability in the task of domestic management. Moreover, those that embody new technology are likely to come with complex *modus operandi* that need to be incorporated into domestic routines if they are to be effective. Homemakers are also required to assess incoming information as a way of ascertaining that their practices are "still" okay and *GH* is illustrative of how often new dangers rear their head, potentially disrupting existing practices. And this has not touched on the other ways in which domestic practice is deemed to have become more complex (e.g. Hochschild 1989). Ultimately, this suggests that the "caring" facet of domestic practice is still writ high; a conclusion that also has been made in other commentary on domestic practice (e.g. DeVault 1991). Exactly how the cultural concerns of domestic practice are related to each other, and whether caring for the domestic environment in the form of cleaning has made way for other, more "important" concerns, is an interesting question that needs to be addressed elsewhere.

It is probable that domestic practitioners are not as anxious as one might expect from a reading of the *GH* pages. Exactly how consumers cope with the complexities and contradictions brought to them by the market is something that needs to be ascertained through further research (see also Ger and Yenicioglu 2004; Martens and Scott 2004). In the context of an attempt to write the late twentieth century UK history of cleaning and cleanliness, we would argue that our examination of one woman's magazine has been useful for revealing some of the underlying social and cultural concerns that have led to the silencing of a specific discourse of cleaning. The research discussed here, therefore, goes some way towards addressing the knowledge gap in this area and to illustrating where further work will be necessary. A detailed historical and cultural examination of cleanliness, cleaning practices and cleaning products in the late twentieth century could draw on a range of potential sources. Documentary sources of a variety of sorts, including home economic texts, relevant trade journals, advice manuals and archives relating to the development and transformation of cleaning products, would contain representations of practices, products and insights into temporally specific cultural priorities. Research of such diverse sources would allow for triangulation, giving a more in-depth insight into the subject area than it has been possible to attain here. This could include a more detailed analysis of the *GH* phenomenon, as apart from the magazine, *GH* has published advice books that offer themselves for examination, but that were not available in the archives in which we did our research. With respect to some crucial periods, like the 1960s, discussions with key staff members who worked for the magazine at this time could provide a source of interesting data. This would be useful for revealing more about the timing, dynamics and reasons for the changes in *GH*'s content and advertising.

It would also be possible to generate oral historical data through one-to-one or focus group interviews with homemakers growing up at different times during the research period, and with relevant others, like home economists, journalists, and the marketers or producers of cleaning products. This would have the distinct advantage of allowing the researchers to comment on practices rather than our current focus on *representations* of practices. To that purpose, we are currently conducting ethnographic research with contemporary householders into their kitchen practices, with a special focus on cleaning and ordering practices (Martens and Scott 2004).

Notes

[1] The domestic practitioner is a person who does various tasks associated with home-making. Our use of the term serves several purposes. As it is gender neutral, it allows for the idea that men also "practice" in the domestic sphere and it circumvents the automatic association with the discursive construct of "the housewife". It nevertheless adopts a feminist approach to what happens in the domestic sphere, by being open to the standpoint that domestic practice entails skill.

[2] Even so, this commentary contains few accounts about Britain and by British scholars (for exceptions, see Horsfield 1998; Sheard 2000; Shove 2003).

[3] As pointed out by a helpful reviewer, references to whiteness and brightness and the appearance factor in cleaning more generally is connected with "othering" practices. This has

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been the focus of some interesting work on the symbolic meanings of cleanliness (e.g. Linde-Laursen 1993; Saugeres 2000). This perspective on cleanliness has been neglected in this paper in favour of a specific focus on the silencing of cleaning practices and associated with it, a focus on domestic practice and care giving.

[4] *GH* is currently the third most popular women's magazine in the UK (Audit Bureau of Circulation Poll 2003) a position it has held fairly constantly for many years (*The Guardian* 2003, 15 August, 17).

[5] From "Special Guide to Shopping" (*GH* 1961, October, 3).

[6] The twenty to thirty pages after the contents page of issues in 1951 and 1961 were missing from the archived copies. These pages contained advertisements and because the advertisement index was also situated at the beginning of issues in 1961, we were not able to check which advertisements were missed out in this year. Interestingly, advertisements in 1951 and 1961 issues were stockpiled at the beginning and the end of the magazine, and the 1951 advertisement index showed that the location (at the front or the back of the issue) of adverts varied between issues, making it possible to see at least some of the adverts which repeatedly featured in the magazine. This suggests that we have not missed out on important editorial material. We also missed the January 2001 issue, which was not available, whilst the 2001 series did not carry the usual index of advertisements.

[7] Of its readership 76% fell into social grade categories B, C1 and C2 in 1984 (figures adapted from Winship 1987, 167).

[8] The focus on kitchens and cleanliness is related to the wider programme of research, which we are conducting on kitchen practices. See Martens and Scott (2004) for further details.

[9] The National Library of Scotland, for instance, allows photocopying limited to one feature per issue. Any form of scanning is prohibited, and magazine contents needs to be recorded manually or with the aid of a laptop. One of the researchers was allowed to use a handheld recorder in an audio room, and notes spoken during the content analysis were transcribed later.

[10] In this sense, our content analysis differs from that of Leiss et al. (1990), who adopt a mixed approach, fusing qualitative and quantitative ways of examining the content of the media they examined. It would have been possible in principle to generate data that would have been suitable for quantitative analysis, but our content analysis has not been structured in a manner that would warrant such an approach.

[11] This advice was similar to that provided by the magazine in the pre-war years, and echoed the application of industrial efficiency thinking to the domestic sphere by consultant home economist Christine Frederick (see White 1970; Cieraad 2002).

[12] Hoover was one of the UK's leading manufacturers of electrically powered domestic aids, including vacuum cleaners and washing machines.

[13] Well-known UK producers of these consumer durables included Hoover, Electrix, Bendix and Creda.

[14] We found advertisements for ICI, Easiclene and Fisholo.

[15] Siscolin distemper, Swedish Perstorp, Hardura flooring were all advertised in these years. Please note that quite a number of the products listed in this article were unfamiliar to us when we commenced our research. This is in part because products that were produced in the 1950s and 1960s are not necessarily available any longer. Lydia Martens is Dutch, too, and brand names clearly vary cross-culturally. The approach we have adopted here is to not only give the product's name, but also its category, which explains what type of product it is.

[16] Advertisements for which this claim was made included Johnsons Wax, Vim, Brillo pads, Glo-Coat floor polish, O-Cedar floor mops and Centurion cream cleaner.

[17] The only strategy to safeguard the family against ill health from germ infection was communicated in the "Take Time to be Young" supplement of April 1961. This advised the adoption of a high standard of cleanliness: "germs are far less likely to thrive in a really clean home. In this national health era of drugs and stimulants, vitamin boosts and antibiotics, the deep-down hygiene of your home is still a most important factor in preserving your family's bright good health" (*GH* 1961, April Supplement, 13). In this same piece, readers are informed that germs can be killed by boiling and that dusters and floor cloths are "real germ traps", but apart from this, no further germ/cleaning advice is given.

[18] The magazine's circulation figures were as follows: 200,000 in 1950; 207,000 in 1957; 159,000 in 1965; 257,000 in 1973; 333,000 in 1978; 349,000 in 1981; and 353,000 in 1984 (Winship 1987). The magazine moved from the National Magazine Company to IPC and *House Beautiful* was incorporated into the magazine in 1968. This will certainly go some way towards explaining the increase in circulation figures between 1965 and 1973 as indicated above. Though we do not have an exact date, we suspect that the original Seal of Guarantee was abolished in the late 1960s, only to be replaced by a similar marker of product excellence in the years preceding 1991.

[19] See also Brunsdon (2000) for a discussion about the incongruence between the notion of the housewife and the second wave feminist.

[20] The then British Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries.

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